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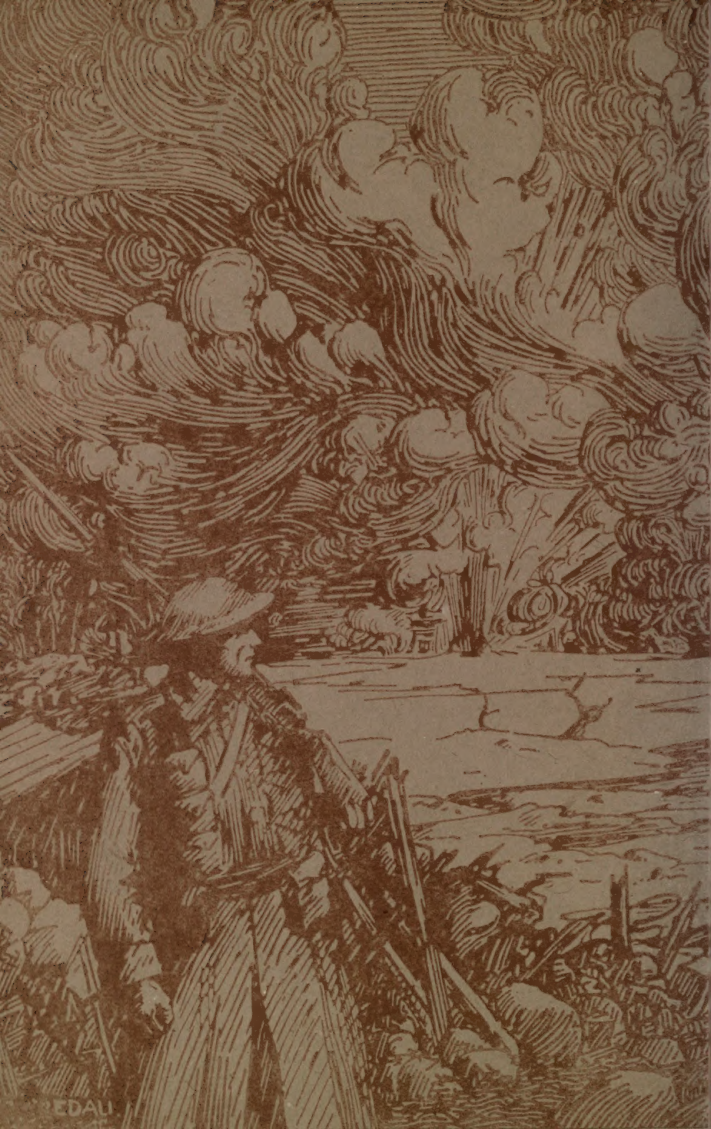


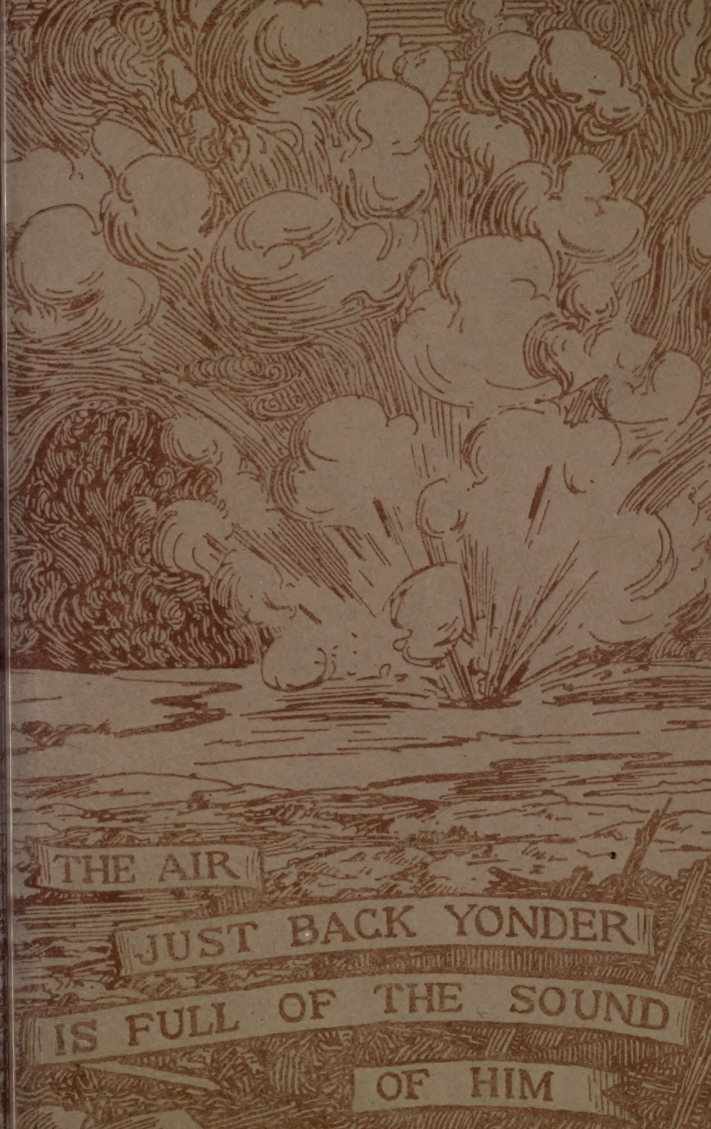
INASMUCH

JOHN OXENHAM

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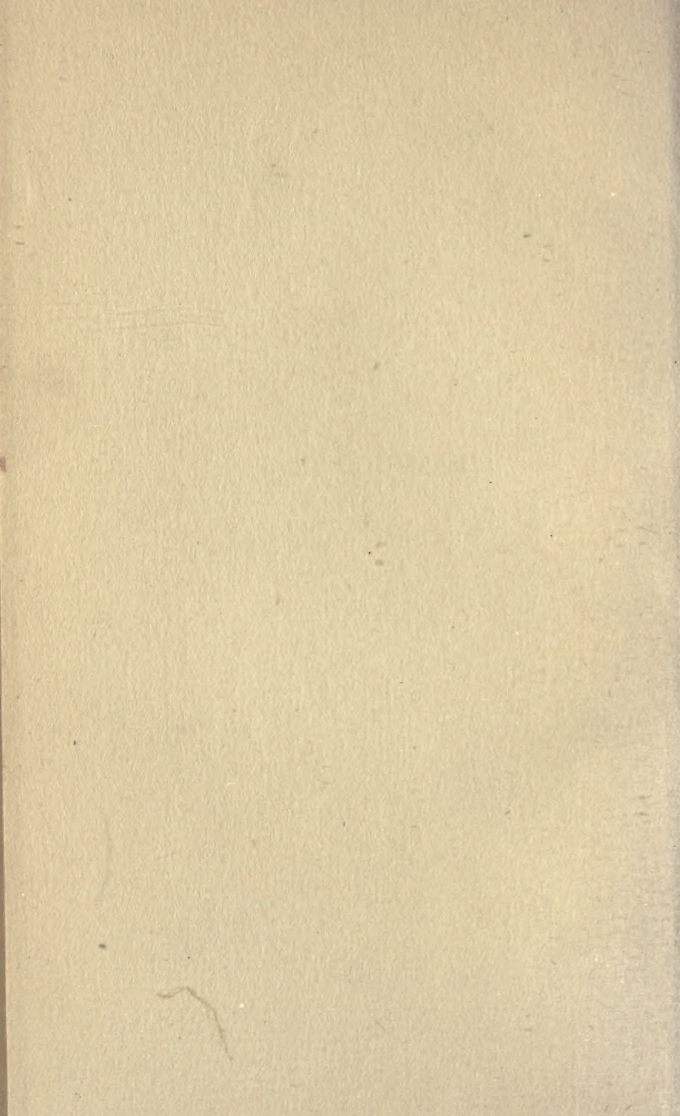
THE AIR


JUST BACK YONDER

IS FULL OF THE SOUND

OF HIM

“ INASMUCH ”





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THE YOUNG WARRIOR

"INASMUCH" SOME THOUGHTS
CONCERNING THE WRECKAGE
OF THE WAR BY JOHN OXENHAM
PUBLISHED BY METHUEN &
CO. LTD. 36 ESSEX STREET
LONDON W.C. MDCCCCXVIII

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one
of the least of these my brethren, ye
have done it unto me.

Matthew.

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FOREWORD

The response brought forth by my appeal on behalf of those prevented by disablement from returning to the civil positions they left for military service has surpassed my highest expectations.

From all sides I have received God-speed and encouragement but from none more whole-heartedly than from John Oxenham, who, though then unknown to me, from its first inception has given to my scheme unstintedly of sympathetic interest, friendly council and active encouragement.

The obligation thus created has been enlarged and intensified by the writing of this little book, the purpose of which is to enforce the debt of gratitude and of active assistance and sympathy which we owe to those who have fought that we might have peace, have suffered that we might escape and have themselves become chained with the fetters of a life-long disablement that we might be free.

For this help, so freely given, I tender my grateful thanks.

THOMAS H. MAWSON.

OUR WOUNDED

Britain, too often, once the struggle
ended,
You have forgotten where your duty lay ;
Your sons, who with their lives your life
defended,
You have left stranded on life's dreary
way.

Your promises were all too soon forgotten ;
The land was strewn with wreckage of
your wars ;
The woes by your indifference begotten
You left untended But you bore the
scars ;—

Scars deep and ghastly on your reputation,
Smirches and blemishes on your fair fame ;
See to it now,—nor sign your abdication !
See to it now,—nor bow our heads with
shame !

If one brave broken soul you leave
unfriended,
The world will know your own soul's life
is dead.
Then shall your hope of dominance be
ended ;—
Worthless the body whence the soul is fled.

OUR WOUNDED

Hereby the world shall test your right to
headship,
Hereby shall know if you are sound at
heart,
Or if your soul is sunken in the dead sleep
Of those who value not "the better part."



FIG. 1.—EVERY MAN WITH HIS GAS-MASK.

“ INASMUCH ”

Just back from the Front, where I have been accorded the privilege of seeing things unseen, unknown, and not at all rightly understood of those at home, I am stirred to the roots of my being with certain aspects of this mighty traffic of War.

I would that every man still left in Great Britain and Ireland could see it all, especially every man whose duty it will presently be to assist in that great reconstruction on the broader lines and deeper foundations which the new Soul of Life, born amid the squalor and wastage of war, will inevitably demand.

“INASMUCH ”

Things are never again going to be as they have been. That we may accept as an axiom. Either they will be very much better or intolerably worse. It is for us—every man of us here at home, and every man who comes back alive out of the *mêlée*, to see that they are better,—that out of this holocaust of death comes a newer, larger, sweeter, and more-worth-living life.

To meet, on every road, those endless streams of heavily-laden men—every man, as he nears the Front, in steel helmet with gas-mask hitched ready for use close under his chin—trudging valiantly through the indescribable abomination of the mud,—to scan their fresh, healthy faces,

TO A FINISH

set with true British bull-dog determination to see a nasty job through to the bitter end and a right finish ;—to catch their eyes with a nod and a cheerful smile, and the quick welcome and recognition of what it all means to them and to oneself,—yes, truly, it made me think furiously, and, again I say, I would that every man—and every woman too, since power so great is theirs—could see it all and be stirred to equal depths and set thinking on ways and means towards betterment.

But women need the sight less than we men. Their hearts cannot fail to go out to those who have risked their all and done so mightily for the salvation of those at home. To the

“ INASMUCH ”

best of their powers they will undoubtedly see the right thing done by the boys when they come back.

As one watches those endless streams of men, munitions, convoys of food going up, and the trickle of ambulances coming down, there hammers ceaselessly on one's brain and one's heart the question " Why ? "

And the answer is inevitable —“ For me—and mine. For all of us at home. To ward off the Devil that would devour us.”

The air just back yonder is full of the sound of him—the clatter and crash and blasting roar of him—the fetid miasm of his poisonous breath—the gnashing of his ravenous teeth, which, but for these valiant mud-caked

BULLDOG TENACITY

men in their tin hats and gas-masks, would be rending us as they have rent so many.

Do the men like it? You do not need to ask them. But they like it better than what would be if they were not here to stop it, and they are set on seeing it through.

They have seen, some of them, the horrors of Arras, of Bapaume, of Ypres,—the poisoned and cratered wastes of the Ancre and the Somme, of Vimy and Messines, country-sides which once smiled in the sun and bore God's harvests and supported life, now savaged and butchered and given over to the vast desolations of Death by the ruthless passage of the invader. And they have ground their teeth and sworn

“ INASMUCH.”

deep down inside them, as they said to themselves,—“ It might have been Kent and Middlesex, Suffolk and Essex. It would have been but for God’s good providence and our good men at Mons and we others since.”

But inevitably also, as one watched those vast processions to the Front, one said to oneself—“ And after ? ”

Ah—*after* !

Hitherto Britain has never lived up to her height, nor done her full duty by her warrior sons—*after*.

The dead—God rest them ! They are infinitely better off. The hale and fit will find their work again, and now, we may hope under better conditions than ever before.



FIG. 2.—BUT THE BROKEN MEN,
WHAT OF THEM?

THE BROKEN MEN

But the broken men—and these dependent on the dead—the broken homes—what of them? Hitherto, in very large measure, these have been left to fend for themselves. The land has been strewn with the wreckage of the wars. At best a certain charity has been doled out to them.

Now things are changed. This can no longer be. The men who are winning the new life through their sufferings and valour will no longer be content with charity for their broken fellows.

These men have a paramount claim, not on our charity but on our justice, and that claim must be met to the final stroke of its very last letter.

That claim cannot be ignored if any smallest sense of right still

“INASMUCH ”

lives in the land. These men have fought for our honour and safety and have come broken out of the fight. Can we leave them to flounder in the furrow like birds with broken wings?

Pensions? of course! But men who have shown the spirit of these men will want more than pensions. They will want to be put into the position of workers still in spite of seeming incapacities. Men of spirit do not live on pensions only when the spirit of work is still in them.

Beginnings have been made in the way of providing the broken men with new outlets for their energies and new outlooks for their futures. And these must be manifolded till every man who desires to work shall be able to

A MIGHTY WORK

turn that desire to fullest account for himself, for those dependent on him, and for the community at large.

It will be a mighty work, and all the more worth doing, and doing with the utmost efficiency, on that account; for it will prove the bodily, mental and spiritual salvation of thousands of those who have stood between us and destruction.

Britain has done many mighty things. She has still mightier things to do in the general reconstruction of life when the war is won.

The problems which will then confront her are gigantic. They will tax to their utmost the cleverest and strongest and truest

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brains in the country, if the ship is to keep anything like an even keel and make anything like fair weather.

But this problem of the broken men lies somewhat outside the overcrowded realm of the politicians, and for that reason it is—unless we bestir ourselves—like to be laid on the shelf for future treatment, when those larger problems are settled—by which time all the broken men will be dead and the reproach of them will once more be upon us for ever.

If this matter is left entirely to the politicians it may be regarded as still-born—dead before it has ever had a chance of life.

Can any reasonable man, no matter how gifted with imagina-

FAITH AND HOPE

tion he may be, conceive of success to a scheme such as this, committed to the tender mercies of even war-reformed permanent officials? —a scheme which depends for its fulfilment on whole-hearted, unselfish devotion to the highest ideals, to that clear vision, born of faith and hope, which sees the waving fields of ripening grain in the handful of corn?

No—If this already pressing matter be left to permanent officialdom it is doomed to failure.

And what will that failure mean?

Remember—these men whose future is at stake are an integral portion of that vast army which has saved the Empire from annihilation. That army has learned much of late. It has fought and

“INASMUCH”

suffered heroically—not for the bolstering up of effete institutions and the perpetuation of old abuses, but for a better world to live in. And this it means to have, cost what it may.

I was at a great meeting not long since and met there the mayors of some important working-class boroughs. As we stood talking over things present and future, I asked several of them—

” What is going to happen if the broken men are left to fend for themselves as they mostly have been hitherto ?

And they looked at one another, and then one said quietly, “ Revolution ! ” and the others nodded. It impressed me. These were not talkative men, but be sure these matters have been

THE SHAMEFUL PAST

talked over among them and they know the minds of their people.

Britain has done many mighty things and will do still mightier. But this one thing she never has done efficiently nor indeed has she ever made any adequate attempt to cope with it.

There are innumerable openings—light occupations in which even broken men can still do good work for the community, and at the same time render themselves independent of mere charity, and preserve that future outlook which to every true man is the very soul of life.

It only needs brains and hearts bent on highest service to find the openings and fit them and the men to a rounded whole.

“ INASMUCH ”

Warm hearts and clever brains are already at work investigating, planning, and devising, with the skill and energy born of life-long contact with men and things, and with soul-stirred understanding of the imminence of the need and of the danger of leaving it unprovided for. An Interim Committee has been formed, with offices at 32 Orchard Street, Oxford St., W. 1., and will be glad to get into touch with any who have this great matter at heart.

Obviously, an undertaking capable of coping with the multitudes of broken men who will soon be upon our hands cannot be promoted and carried out entirely by private means. Government aid will be as es-

RED TAPE

sential and as deservedly due, to this portion of the great scheme of reconstruction as to all others. But in such a scheme as this, whose very essence is the sympathetic consideration of particular needs and their adaptation to offered possibilities, it is absolutely essential that the ordinary red-tape formalities of officialdom be eliminated from the very outset.

Every man and woman who feels what he or she owes to these men should be willing to help according to their powers. Much help is already promised. But much more will be needed, and that, it is to be hoped, the Government will, under efficient safeguards, provide.

It is proposed to set up

“INASMUCH ”

industrial villages all over the country, so that the broken men may live as near to their own former homes as possible, and in them to revive many of the village industries which have gone abroad—to capture others which are suitable but have not hitherto been practised here—to fit every such village with electric power brought into every house—to reclaim waste lands and institute nurseries for the preparation of trees for re-afforestation—to form colonies for market-gardening, and a hundred other light occupations adapted to the bodily powers of the men. In a word—it is hoped to revive the village life of Britain on new large lines which will make that life as entirely attractive and satisfying

A GREAT IDEA

as the life of the towns.

There are multitudinous details and side-issues to be considered, but this is not the place to deal with them.

There is the broad idea—will you help to carry it out and so help Great Britain for once to wipe out the reproach of her broken sons—broken in her service, and hitherto left helpless by the wayside?

It is a great idea—a great hope. But the new world for which we are fighting will be ruled by men of great ideas, clear vision, large outlook, and warm true hearts, bent on helping the world up and on with no axes of their own to grind.

INASMUCH as these our broken brothers have so freely

“ INASMUCH ”

given of their strength and manhood for our salvation at home, in all honour we owe them every recompense within our power.

INASMUCH as ye do it unto the least of these His broken brethren, ye do it unto Him.

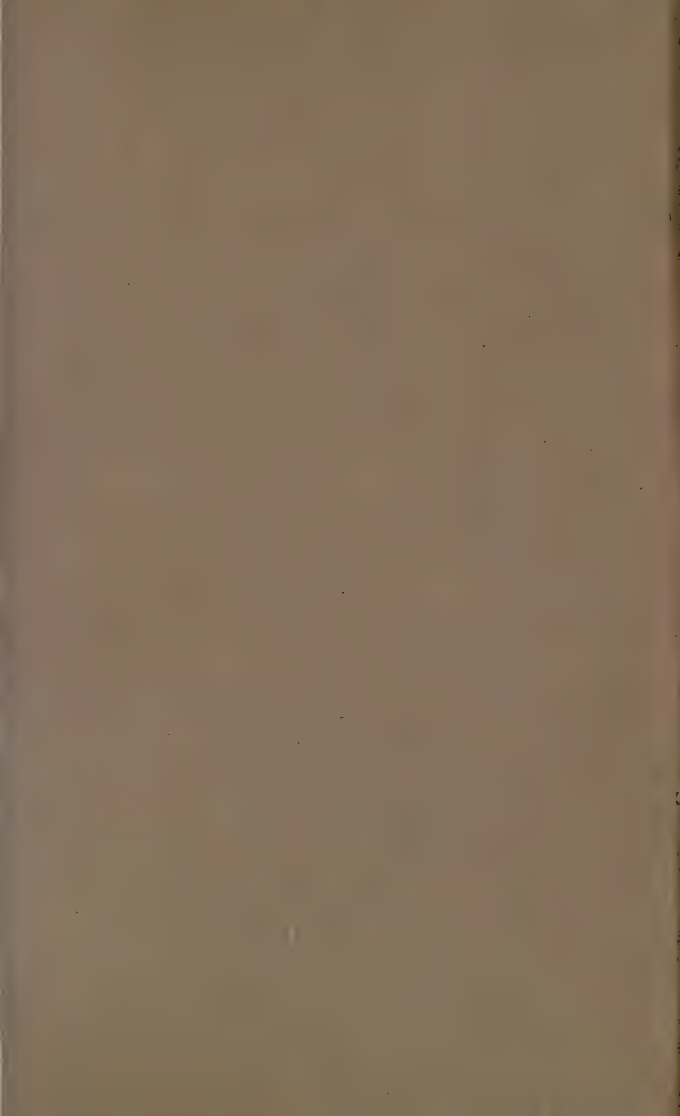
JOHN OXENHAM.

Inasmuch as ye shall tender
Service to My broken ones,
Unto Me the life ye render, —
See Me in My wounded sons!
Let not one lie down with sorrow,
Let not one fall by the way,
Build for them a glad Tomorrow,
Share with them the Coming Day!

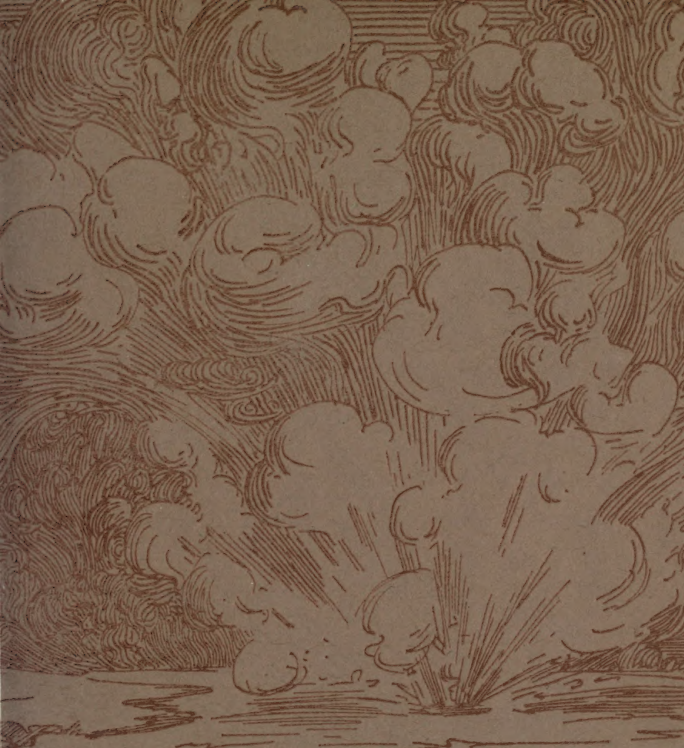
John Oxenham

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